Home > Statistics > Detailed methodology information > Concepts, sources and methods
> Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods > 2023 > Methods: Four pillars of labour statistics
> Administrative data > Single Touch Payroll (STP)

✅ Latest release

Single Touch Payroll (STP)

Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods
Reference period: 2023

Released 24/11/2023

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) receives payroll information from employers through

Single Touch Payroll (STP) enabled payroll and accounting software each time the employer runs its payroll. The ATO provides selected employer and job level data items from the STP system to the ABS for the production of official statistics. STP replaces the need for businesses to provide a payment summary annual report or 'group certificates.'

Estimates based on STP data begin from January 2020 at the earliest. Employers with 20 or more employees (large employers) commenced transition to STP reporting on 1 July 2018. Employers with less than 20 employees (small employers) began transitioning to STP on 1 July 2019. Any reporting concessions that were made available for small employers ended on 30 June 2021. Almost all large employers and eligible small employers are now reporting through STP.

Other data sources

The STP data are enhanced through combining other administrative data held by the ABS (also sourced from the Australian taxation system).

Industry of activity, sector and employment size variables of the employing business are sourced from the ABS Business Register (ABSBR).

Sex, age and residential geography variables are primarily sourced from Client Register data (supplied by ATO to the ABS as part of the transfer of Personal Income Tax data). Sex can only be sourced from Client Register data. When age and residential geography are not available from Client Register data, they are sourced from STP data. The ABS receives annual snapshots of de-identified Client Register data from the ATO, for use in the production of statistics.

Only limited STP based estimates with both employer and jobholder characteristics are currently produced (i.e. Weekly Payroll Jobs).

Scope and coverage

Detailed information on the scope and coverage of Labour statistics derived from Single Touch Payroll data can be found in the methodology pages accompanying respective statistical releases: Weekly Payroll Jobs (/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/latest-release#methodology) ; Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/monthly-employee-earnings-indicator/latest-release#methodology) and Public Sector Employment and Earnings (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release#methodology) .

STP outputs

Weekly Payroll Jobs

STP data are compiled into weekly indexes of changes in the number of payroll jobs. These are published in [Weekly Payroll jobs (/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/latest-release)](/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/latest-release) on a monthly basis. Payroll jobs as reported to the ATO through STP are in scope of these estimates. A payroll job is a relationship between an employee and their employing enterprise, where the employee is paid in the reference week through STP-enabled payroll or accounting software and reported to the ATO.

Each release contains both payroll jobs indexes and percentage changes. Estimates are available at the national, state and territory and Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) division and subdivision by selected jobholder and employer attributes.

Levels for jobs and wages are not currently available. The payroll jobs index provides a measure of changes in jobs over time since the week ending 14 March 2020. Information on levels for jobs are best sourced from estimates of filled jobs from the quarterly [Labour Account (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release)](/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release) and estimates of employed persons from the monthly [Labour Force Survey (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release). More information on the relationship between payroll jobs and LFS employment is included in the [Weekly Payroll Jobs methodology page (/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-14-october-2023)](/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-14-october-2023).

The data underlying these estimates are revised in each release.

The estimates are presented as an original series only. Seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are not yet available. A number of years of data will be required before seasonal patterns can be observed and adjusted for.

Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator

STP data are compiled into calendar month reference periods of wages and salaries paid by employers. These are currently released as experimental estimates in the [Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/monthly-employee-earnings-indicator/latest-release)](/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/monthly-employee-earnings-indicator/latest-release) on a six-monthly basis, with the intention to release on a quarterly basis in the future. Estimates in this release are compiled using STP data received around 6 weeks after the end of the latest reference month.

The release includes percentage changes and total level estimates. Percentage change estimates are available for national, state and territory, Australian and New Zealand

Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) division, employment size and public/private sector, as outlined in Standard Economic Sector Classifications of Australia. Level estimates for these classifications will be available in future releases.

The estimates are presented as an original series only. Seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are not yet available. A number of years of data will be required before seasonal patterns can be observed and adjusted for.

To improve the comparability of estimates between calendar months, an adjustment has been applied to account for the differing number of days in each month. The adjustment standardises all months to an average length of days and is known as calendar adjustment. This type of adjustment is usually done as part of seasonal adjustment.

The data underlying these estimates are revised in each release.

Public Sector Employment and Earnings

STP data are compiled annually to measure public sector wages and employment. These are published annually in Public Sector Employment and Earnings (PSEE) (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release) . Each release contains public sector cash, wages and salaries for the financial year, and employment during the month of June.

Estimates are available by:

- Level of Government (Local, State and Commonwealth)
- National, state and territory
- Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) division

PSEE provides data compiled from the STP, starting from the 2021-22 financial year. PSEE STP output replaces the annual Survey of Employment and Earnings which covered 2007-8 to 2021-22.